

MEMORANDUM

DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
December 18, 2008

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

6536

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ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: Brent Scowcroft *BS*
SUBJECT: US Participation in the United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural
Organization (UNESCO)

In a memorandum at Tab B, Secretary Kissinger has recommended that you issue the necessary Presidential certification required by the Case/Bingham Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974 and make a corresponding request to Congress for funds to resume US dues payments to UNESCO.

Because of arbitrary anti-Israeli actions taken at the previous UNESCO General Conference session in 1974, Congress enacted the Case/Bingham Amendment barring further US payments to UNESCO pending a Presidential certification that the Organization: "(1) has adopted policies which are fully consistent with its educational, scientific and cultural objectives and (2) has taken concrete steps to correct its recent actions of a primarily political character."

The latest UNESCO General Conference took place in Nairobi in November under the leadership of Director General M'Bow of Senegal -- the first African to head a major UN specialized agency, elected in 1974 with our enthusiastic support. The results of the Conference on issues that concern us were mixed but basically positive. As a result of active lobbying by the US:

- Israel was assigned to the European Regional Group, thus reversing a 1974 Conference action that had triggered the Case/Bingham Amendment.

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- The Conference rejected efforts to raise the Zionism/racism equation.
- The Conference did reaffirm its other 1974 actions: criticizing Israel for continuing archeological excavations in Jerusalem alleged to be endangering Moslem monuments; withholding assistance funds from Israel. The Conference, however, rejected Arab efforts to institute other sanctions.
- The Conference also reaffirmed criticism of Israel for allegedly denying educational and cultural rights to the populations in occupied Arab territories.

On a broader issue, not directly related to the Case/Bingham Amendment but of deep and abiding interest to the US, the Conference postponed action on a Soviet-inspired draft declaration on mass media which would have enshrined the concept of state control. The outcome was widely welcomed and helps account for the generally favorable US media reaction to the Conference.

The Secretary recommends your moving now to issue the certification and to request the necessary funds from Congress to bring us back into full and regular participation in UNESCO. Not only were the results at Nairobi positive, but in the absence of movement toward a Middle East settlement and a lack of gestures of Israeli flexibility on UNESCO issues, the outcome on Israel-related issues was as good as could be expected. There will be no real chance for further progress before the next General Conference session in 1978. The results, moreover, conform to the estimate Director General M'Bow gave to the Secretary last October, when the Secretary said he would give full support to the effort to seek resumed funding from Congress if M'Bow's predictions were borne out.

The US has a treaty obligation to pay its assessed share of the UNESCO budget. We are now in arrears for almost all of 1975 and 1976 and have been assessed the 1977 and 1978 dues.

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A decision against requesting funds of Congress would result in:

- resentment from close friends and bitterness from Third World countries, particularly the Africans, who helped us to insure the positive outcome at Nairobi;
- a severe weakening of our ability to assert influence and leadership on important UNESCO issues, such as renewed Soviet efforts to promote international action favoring government control of the media.

Were we not to be in a position to resume payment, the US would have to consider withdrawing from UNESCO. Such a serious step would involve:

- cutting the innumerable ties through UNESCO between American scientific/educational/intellectual circles and their foreign counterparts;
- depriving the US Government of a major means to influence education, science, culture and information /communications in the Third World;
- possible implications for US membership elsewhere in the UN system, most immediately in the ILO, where we are already in the second year of a two-year notice to withdraw.

Recommendations for the necessary funds are already contained in a proposed supplemental for FY 1977 and in your budget proposals for FY 1978. These amount to \$69 million in the supplemental to cover dues for CY 1975, CY 1976 and CY 1977, and \$27 million in the FY 1978 budget to cover CY 1978. Thus, your approval of the Secretary's recommendation would require no change in the budget.

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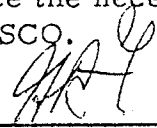
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OMB concurs in the Secretary of State's recommendation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That you sign the letters at Tab A informing the Congress that the conditions of the Case/Bingham Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974 have been met and therefore the Congress should appropriate the necessary funds to bring us up to date in our payments to UNESCO.

Approve



Disapprove

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